(c) and (d) To overcome the shortage of pilots, foreign pilots are employed by the airline operators after validation of their foreign licences.

(e) Recruitment of pilots is the prerogative of individual airline operator. The Government has taken various steps to reduce the gap between demand and supply of skilled Indian pilots. These include conditionally increasing the age-limit to 65 years for pilots for exercising the privileges of their licences for commercial transport operations under prescribed conditions, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/Aero Club of India.

Mandatory flying checks for pilots

187. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that some flying instructors are clearing aspiring pilots without conducting mandatory flying checks that test their competence;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to stop such practices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) It has been reported in the Times of India on 6th November, 2007 that Capt. Ashim Taxali, Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) of M/s. Carver Aviation Academy has cleared some student pilots without their flight test. An enquiry has been ordered by Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to investigate the malpractices reported in Carver Aviation Academy. The final investigation report is awaited.

(c) Capt. Ashim Taxali has been removed from the CFI position in M/s Carver Aviation Academy pending final investigation. The position of CFI has been taken over by Capt. A.K. Mohan. Show Cause notices have been served to Capt. Ashim Taxali and the student pilots who were falsely cleared by him. Further action will be taken after the finalisation of the investigation.

Casualty in the security area at Delhi Airport

188. SHRI RAJ KUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTI LAL VORA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Ms. Sanskriti, an Aeronautic Engineer of Deccan Airlines was found killed in the security area of IGI Airport, Delhi on 22.10.07;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether she was on duty at the moment of her death;

(d) whether the mystery of her death has been solved;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 22.10.2007 while inspecting the satellite apron,

Ms. Sanskriti Sinha, an Aeronautical Engineer of Deccan Airlines was found dead in the operational area of IGI Airport, Delhi.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) to (f) The case is under investigation with the Delhi Police.

Helipads for benefit of critically ill patients

†189. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to make helipads for shifting critical patients from one end of the country to the other;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any step in this regard, so far;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Government, at present, do not propose to construct helipads exclusively for handling critical patients, however, helipads are being planned in major cities which could be used for medical exigencies also.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Bagdogra Airport as International Airport

†190. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal regarding making Bagdogra Airport as an International Airport;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay;

(c) whether Government have received applications from companies for undertaking new flights;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Bagdogra airport is a defence airport where Airports Authority of India (AAI) operates a Civil Enclave to cater to limited domestic traffic. Further, no airlines has made any firm request to operate international flights from this airport. As such, presently, there is no proposal to declare Bagdogra airport as an International airport.

(c) No requests have been received by AAI for undertaking new flights from Bagdogra.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Government have issued Route Dispersal Guidelines to regulate air traffic in the country keeping in view the traffic needs of various regions specially the North East Region. All scheduled Airlines are required to deploy at least 10% of their capacity deployed on major trunk routes on routes to and from North East, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Bagdogra is part of North East Region. Subject to compliance with Route Dispersal Guidelines, Airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country in their commercial judgement.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.